1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

142
291
642
643

[403]

PLATE I. Paramount Chief Pontino Mpezeni Jere III, K.M., standing with a man from the chief's capital. The man points upwards and sings that, because they conquered the Ngoni, the Whites must have come from heaven.

[Frontpiece Facing p. i]

1:Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1954 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

344
331

PLATE X. Thatching a school roof. The county chief has told men from nearby villages to do this work.

205
493
516

PLATE XI. A mobile post office halted near a county court.

[Facing p. 168]

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

Council mentioned above spent some tweny years of his life in Johannesburg. Fort Jameson itself is not a sufficiently big town for this process to take place within it, and yet it is only in Fort Jameson or on the tobacco farms that a man can live with a leg in both camps, going home to the village at the week-ends and probably keeping his wife in the village during the wet season to tend her crop.

On the other hand, there is some rivalry between the traditional leaders and the comparatively prosperous townspeople. The well-clad and well-housed Ngoni of the township are sometimes described scornfully by village people as 'merely White'. There is a feeling that the leading African traders are trying to monopolize the economic opportunities in the villages. Recently the same prominent Ngoni businessman proposed that he should take over the delivery of mail to the Native Authorities, which he claimed he would be able to do more efficiently with a car than can the present postman on a bicycle. The Paramount Chief did not answer this proposal but wrote instead to the Administration to complain against the danger of one man being allowed to earn so much more than anyone else while there were so many people who needed money. At the same time, men whose lives are led principally in the towns complain that in the villages there is 'nothing but jungle', and that the chiefs are old-fashioned and obstructive.

The Administration

The relationship between the Provincial Administration and the Ngoni is characteristically one of superordination and subordination. The District Officer can send for any Ngoni, but not even the Paramount Chief can send for the District Officer. This characteristic arises from two sources, from the premiss which we find held all over Southern Africa, that any White is superior to any Black, and from the supervisory role allotted to the Administration in the Native Authority scheme. These two facets of the same relationship are not always seen separately by the Ngoni, and in many contexts their behaviour towards the Administration is governed entirely by the fact that the District Officer and those above him are all White. Official reports by the Administration during the reign of Mpezeni II repeatedly remarked on the Paramount Chief's distrust of Whites, and this attitude still persists. Any kind of trouble at all, particularly when it is seen as a characteristic of the present times as opposed to the glorious trouble-free past of the days of peace, before the Whites

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

V. EARNING A LIVING

Intertribal Trade

439 There is little trade between the Ngoni and the neighbouring tribes, whose products are largely the same as their own. Fish is brought up from the Luangwa valley by Kunda and some of it is sold to the Ngoni of the Cipalamba, through whose villages the hawkers pass on their way to Fort Jameson. Bracelets are sometimes brought from Portuguese East Africa by Chikunda. The main attraction for these hawkers is Fort Jameson itself, and it is the fact that the town is encircled by the Ngoni that gives rise to trading with them. The geographical location of the town has also led to the growth in Ngoni [366] country of many stores and what are known in the vernacular as hotels, where tea and buns can be bought and where sometimes there is shelter for the night.

Of greater importance in the life of the tribe than these intertribal links are those arising from White and Indian economic activities. We may distinguish three zones of interaction, the shops both in Fort Jameson township and scattered throughout the district owned by Whites and Indians, the local tobacco farms, and the mines of Southern Rhodesia. The Ngoni have come to need cloth for clothes which they cannot produce themselves, and it is doubtful if there would be enough animals to provide skins for the tribe even if they did not insist on cloth. The need to earn money with which to buy clothes, soap, and other necessities can be met only by seeking employment on a farm, in Fort Jameson township, or farther off. A few people earn enough by selling vegetables in Fort Jameson, and there is a certain amount of maize and other cereals sold. These sales, however, do not provide sufficient income to reduce materially the extent to which people go out to work.

Control of Movement

101 To the White traveller, Fort Jameson District is an island of tobacco in a sea of bush. To the Ngoni, the island is not so sharply demarcated, and its characteristic property is cattle, not tobacco, yet it still remains an island, surrounded by a sea of other tribes whose 101 traditions are different from their own. The ships that cross this sea 489 are the lorries. In time past, men used to walk to their destinations, ● [493] going by Feira to Southern Rhodesia, or across the Luangwa to Broken Hill. A few used to go down to Lake Nyasa, and thence to the

/8 cont'd/

352 Beds are owned in general by the younger generation only, and then at the rate of one per household. Otherwise, everyone sleeps on the floor on a reed mat. During the day, the mat is rolled
285 up except when needed for drying flour in the sun. These mats are made from reeds that grow near streams. The reeds are split in four, and are threaded with a thin rope made from the inner bark of the nzizi tree. Wooden headrests are now a rarity, and if any
513 headrests at all is used, it is a European pillow. Blankets, quilts
[177] and, less frequently, sheets, are bought from stores.

/9/ V

412 The chief tool for use in the garden is the hoe. Ruins of fur-
[325] naces for smelting iron ore are still to be seen, but are not now used,
[567] and are said to have been worked in the old days only by Chewa slaves. Hoe blades are bought in the stores, and hafted with a handle made in the village. Handle making is a man's job, but one that every man knows how to do. Axes are made from blades bought in the store, or else from a worn down hoe blade, with a home-made handle. Adzes are used for mortar making, and young boys make miniature adzes as toys. A pointed blade hafted on to the end of a straight handle is used for making holes in the ground when building.

493 Sledges and, less commonly, unarticulated carts with solid
[241] wheels are made for transporting the harvest from the fields to the
[493] village, and for collecting firewood. These are pulled by cattle, not always oxen, using simple yokes made of wood and sinew, with a wooden drawbar.

224 Hunting is carried on in the dry season, particularly towards
411 the end, when the grass burns easily. Guns of varying degrees of antiquity are used, but none of these are made by Ngoni, although the Chewa still make guns. On a hunt, the rank and file are armed
224 with throwing spears and knobkerries. The gun carriers walk about two hundred yards in front of the main body, who are spread on a single line at right angles to the line of advance. The leader of